

Dolorosa's students find

their own voice

It starts with Dolorosa and it ends with Dolorosa. With these words, Dutch Ambassador to Indonesia Ruud Treffers opened the sculpture exhibition *Ide dan Eksplorasi* (Idea and Exploration) that is showing at One Gallery in West Jakarta until Feb. 26.

Basically, that is right: Dolorosa Sinaga exhibits together with her students. But the accent lies strongly on the students from several generations, since Indonesia's most famous female sculptor is showing only three of her recent works.

Almost all of the other 11 artists started, or at least learned, under her guidance, and among their sculptures are a lot that still show the strong influence of Dolorosa. Tall, slim and slender women sculptures are most dominant in this exhibition, writes curator Setianingsih Purnomo in the catalog.

Not surprisingly, since every new thing usually starts by repeating something. Some works really look like studies of Dolorosa's unmistakable women dancers, mothers and workers, who often have a deep expression of strength because of having suffered a lot in their lives.

But it would not be fair at all to end here with a description of the style developed by the artists participating in this exhibition. Sculptures have real substance, they are the realization of the expectations and fantasies of the artists, who transfer their ideas through a three-dimensional

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media, Setianingsih wrote.

Therefore, the exhibition presents a lot of very unique styles, thoughts and movements. The most independent and mature among them is definitively to be found in the works of Awan P. Simatupang. The 36-year-old presents filigree sculptures from steel, that almost are installations. The impressive piece *The show must go on*, for example, shows a fabric in the form of a galley ship — the oars are made from spoons and the main entrance is a vertical vagina.

"Almost every day I have to pass a huge factory. Whatever happens, the production goes on. I wanted to translate this never-ending, all-eating process of industrial production into my art. The vagina is the symbol for fertility," Awan said of this piece.

The most courageous work probably comes from Rita Dharani from Yogyakarta. The 26-year-old law student presents three huge busts from cement. The very expressive faces have characteristics of apes and seem to be seeking help from outside without being able to cry it out themselves. While two are colored pop art style in purple-orange and red, the third one is sterilized in white, with gray letters falling down its head.

The works of former Jakarta Institute of Arts student Renjani can be characterized as introverted and sometimes self-ironic. The squared, chrome plated bodies seem a little cool, but often play with moments of parody: *Meditation* portrays a female in a yoga position, but with huge headphones. And *Pieta Lotus* tells the story of Renjani's dog that died a year ago — reminding viewers of the formation that Dolorosa often uses to show the grieving of a mother with her child on her knee.

"I like clear forms. My subjects are seriously meant, but I still want to keep some irony," Renjani said.

From the visitors' perspective, though, the most popular pieces seemed to be some rather friendly works by Taufan AP and Budi Santoso, who both studied at the Yogyakarta's Indonesian Institute of Arts.

Bersepeda Ria by Budi shows a Javanese couple riding a Holland bike, and three elegant studies of couples and dancers by Taufan drew the most interest.

It should be mentioned that both artists also show much more controversial sculptures. Especially Budi, who gives his figures extreme tension with crying faces, huge feet and hands symbolizing the hard work of simple people.

And Taufan created *Demi Pembangunan* — a kind of parable for the metropolitan Jakarta: An impressive mount of houses from bronze is built



JP/Christina Schott

Sculptor Renjani poses with one of her sculptures (*Meditation*) of a female figure in a yoga position wearing oversized headphones. A former student of the Jakarta Institute of Arts, Renjani's works are unobtrusive and ironic.

on a mass of corpses and men, whose only chance to escape is to climb up the walls.

Among the artists in this exhibition are also several expatriate women who learned sculpture under Dolorosa. Heleni Stoelinga from Greece presents flowing figures in Giacometti-style.

Although very close to her teacher's models, Dutch Jean-

nette Bijlmer's exploration of women and dancers reaches a strong standard of expression.

Gabriele Sausen, wife of the German diplomat, created a series of small, round and husky bodies, all of which tell stories of life. *Joy of Living* shows a mother swinging her child in the air, while *Way of Life* describes the process of life from birth to death.



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One of three works on display by Dolorosa Sinaga depicting a woman falling asleep in her seat. The country's most respected female sculptor has strongly influenced her students, as evident in their works.